

**EDUCATION****OVERVIEW**

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) joint work on education is guided by Resolution 16/2016, *Honourable Process to Develop Recommendations to Support First Nations Education Reform*. Five Joint Task Teams have been established comprised of members from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the AFN and First Nations regional representatives. This work is guided by the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and supported by the National Indian Education Council (NIEC).

Budget 2016 allocated \$2.6 billion over five years for improving primary and secondary education for First Nations children and \$129.4 million over two years for supporting early learning and child care. On December 5, 2017, Chiefs-In-Assembly resolved to support Resolution 65/2017, *New Interim Funding Approach for First Nation Education*. This resulted in the co-development of a policy proposal for a new funding approach to First Nations on-reserve education to support students, schools and communities. .

**Transforming First Nations K-12 Education**

ISC returned to Cabinet with new options for First Nations to access the funds allocated in Budget 2016. Regional First Nations representatives and the AFN entered into a co-development process of a new policy option to inform the Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) in order to ensure *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* and to promote regional

authority and processes. Objectives of the policy proposal were to unlock the existing “Transforming First Nation Education” funding commitments from Budget 2016 (currently limited to school board funding) and implement the actions below.

- Replace ISC’s outdated, inefficient and inadequate proposal-based education programs with regional education approaches and funding models that provide sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding.
- Support First Nations Regions to develop their own education funding models that use the education funding model of that province as a base calculation, plus adaptations and additions that provide funding for the unique needs of First Nation students, communities and schools.

On February 28, 2018, the MC was passed by the Cabinet on Diversity and Inclusion. Immediately thereafter, the Drafting Team co-developed a Foundational Paper and Terms and Conditions to inform the Treasury Board Submission (TBS). In October 2018, the TBS was signed and approved, and implementation of the decision commences in 2019-2020.

With K-12 Transformation, First Nations now have the opportunity to develop Regional Education Agreements (REAs). REAs are a new education funding model that uses the provincial education funding model as a base

calculation, plus adaptations, and enhancements, to provide funding for the unique needs of First Nations students, communities, and schools. First Nations across the country are currently engaging in regional technical table meetings to further examine their interim formulas and determine next steps.

Beginning in April 1, 2019, for First Nations that haven't entered into an REA, ISC will implement a series of new formula-based regional funding models for elementary and secondary education, replacing a number of proposal-based programs, which reduces the administrative and reporting burden on First Nations schools, communities, and organizations.

Each regional model is aimed at ensuring that students attending First Nations schools are supported by predictable base funding that is directly comparable to what students enrolled in provincial education systems receive. On top of this base funding, ISC will be providing expanded supports for full-time kindergarten and increased language and culture programming at on-reserve schools.

K-12 Transformation eliminated most proposal-based funding, however, the following will remain available:

- Research and Learning & Innovations in Education Program.
- A component of the High Cost Special Education Program.
- The Education Partnerships Program.

In December 2018, the CCOE recommended that the AFN and the NIEC work with ISC to finalize the Research and Learning & Innovations in Education Program Guidelines. This program was once an ISC national selection process. With the new Program Guidelines, First Nations will have control over the funds, and will implement the programs using their preferred regional allocation methodologies.

The High Cost Special Education Program (HCSEP) has historically been underfunded and not meeting the needs of First Nations learners. To address this, the NIEC and CCOE recommended an HCSEP Review. Phase one would generate an interim report based on existing information and requesting increased funding in 2019. Phase two would deliver a comprehensive report with a policy change recommendation in 2021.

## UPDATE

### Joint Task Teams

**1) Statutory Funding** – This Joint Task Team was analyzing legislative and non-legislative education funding options to see which would best meet the fiscal principles that support First Nations education vision. The CCOE recommended that the NIEC and The First Nations Education Statutory Task Team defer the conversation and conduct further research on statutory funding for

First Nations education, until regional education funding processes (especially legal processes that have implications of education funding) come to a close.

**2) Post-Secondary Education (PSE)** – Budget 2017 announced an additional \$90 million over two years to support post-secondary students and called for collaborative review with Indigenous partners of all current federal post-secondary programs.

In July 2017, the Chiefs-in-Assembly resolved to support Resolution 14/2017, *Post-Secondary Education Federal Review*, which would provide a First Nations report and/or submission. The Post-Secondary Education Review process was completed in June 2018 with the publication of the *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review 2018 Interim Report*. Chiefs-in-Assembly passed AFN Resolution 29/2018, *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Report and Recommendations*, which accepted the *First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review 2018 Interim Report* and directed the AFN, CCOE and NIEC to work in partnership with ISC to develop an honourable joint process that would allow for the development of regional Post-Secondary Education models.

From September 2018 to November 2018, the NIEC worked in partnership with ISC under tight timelines to develop the First Nations Post-Secondary Education Policy Proposal that would be the First Nations option for policy change in an ISC MC on Indigenous Post-Secondary Education, set to go to Cabinet in 2019.

Following the AFN Annual General Assembly and the passing of AFN Resolution 29/2018, the AFN CCOE and the NIEC worked in partnership with ISC to co-draft a First Nations PSE Policy Proposal; with the overall goal to secure adequate funding and supports for post-secondary students and First Nations Institutions of Higher Learning. The development of the First Nations PSE policy proposal was based on recommendations from a year-long review of current federal programming and supports. With an overall budgetary

ask of \$1.7 billion dollars, the policy proposal focuses on three priority areas:

1. immediate investments to support First Nations post-secondary education;
2. modernization of existing Indigenous Services Canada PSE programs; and
3. the opportunity for the development of Treaty-based, self-government based, and/or regional PSE models. The proposed changes reaffirm First Nations jurisdiction over First Nations education and ensures that students and First Nations Institutes of Higher Learning are better supported to close the attainment gap in post-secondary education and pursue their life-long learning aspirations

**3) Early Childhood Education (ECE)** – The joint task team examined regional differences and best practices regarding the implementation of full time K4/K5 in First Nations schools. . The Task Team met on May 3-4, 2018, and November 6-7, 2018, and further emphasized the need to focus on infrastructure, instruction, and activities for regions to expand to full time K4/K5. The Team’s recommendations informed the K-12 policy proposal:

1. for ISC to provide First Nations funding to expand access to full-time equivalent and provide adequate, predictable, and sustainable supplementary funding for quality K4/K5 on reserve; and
2. for First Nations to have the option to have Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) be financially supported by nominal roll.

# ISSUE UPDATE

## March 2019

In the K-12 Terms and Conditions, the major changes impacting K4/K5 include:

1. **Facilities:** children ages 4 and 5 can attend an early learning program in a certified school or in a rented non-school building facility, this includes AHSOR facilities;
2. **Educators:** Early Childhood Educators or certified teachers are both eligible as classroom instructors/educators;
3. **Curriculum:** core funding allocations from the new funding formula can be used to purchase, adapt, and develop curriculum for kindergarten, especially important where K4 is not offered by the province. K4/K5 curriculum is up to the communities' discretion. The ECE task team has begun to sunset at the national level as we move toward implementation at regional levels.

**4) Education Infrastructure** – The Task team met for the second time between January 17-18, 2019, to discuss several topics, including: operations and maintenance of First Nations educational facilities; self-

government infrastructure, and; and how advancements made in early learning and child care, kindergarten 4-5 and Jordan's Principle impact education infrastructure. The next task team meeting will be a First Nations only meeting in order to identify future policy objectives and recommendations for the NIEC and the CCOE.

**5) Unique Needs of Northern and Remote Communities** – This Joint Task Team met on May 3 and 4, 2018, and August 8 and 9, 2018. The Team will continue to expand on the work plan and critical path for 2019-2020, including prioritizing the development of a paper around recruitment and retention in remote First Nations schools. The Team will continue to provide recommendations and feedback to research being conducted on Cost Drivers in First Nations Elementary and Secondary Schools in Northern and Remote and inform the work of the other task teams.

## NEXT STEPS

The work of the AFN Education Sector is well underway. In the upcoming months, the following activities will be undertaken directly from or supported by the AFN:

- **January 29-30, 2019** - Northern and Remote Task Team Meeting
- **February 4, 2019** – PSE Memorandum to Cabinet Date
- **February 1-4, 2019** – Raised Voices: Carriers of Hope Youth Event September 2018
- **February 7-8, 2019** – K-12 Expert Meeting
- **February 12, 2019** - AFN 'It's Our Time' Toolkit Launch
- **February 12-14, 2019** – First Nation Directors of Education National Forum